

NEWS RELEASE

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TWO SENTENCED IN METHAMPHETAMINE CONSPIRACY

Randy G. Massey, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that **ERICA L. CARPENTER**, age 19, of Centralia, IL, and **AARON S. WRIGHT**, age 33, of DeSoto, Illinois, were recently sentenced in the United States District Court in Benton, Illinois. CARPENTER was sentenced on May 24, 2006, to 240 months imprisonment (20 years) and was placed on 10 years supervised release. WRIGHT was sentenced on May 25, 2006, to 210 months imprisonment (20 years) and was placed on 5 years supervised release.

Both defendants had previously pleaded guilty to a one count Indictment returned by a Federal Grand Jury sitting in Benton, Illinois, charging conspiracy to manufacture and distribute five hundred (500) grams or more of a mixture and substance containing methamphetamine. Two co-defendants were each previously sentenced to 240 months imprisonment.

The investigation in this case was a cooperative effort between the Joint Narcotics Unit of the Mt. Vernon Police Department and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies pursuant to their participation in the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. In addition, the Jefferson County States Attorney's Office has assisted throughout the investigation.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a joint and cooperative effort of the United States Attorney's Office, the Jefferson County State's Attorney's Office, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and Illinois State Police directed at removing guns and drugs from our communities.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney George Norwood.

